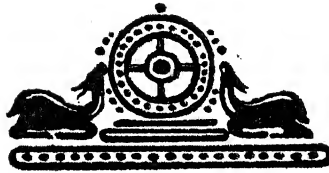


EDGEWAYS AND THE SAINT

EDGEWAYS
AND
THE SAINT
POEMS AND A FARCE

BY
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*DEDICATED
TO
MY SISTER SAROJINI*

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THE SAINT

Edgeways : Poems

Prelude

*I, poet, dip my pen
In mine own blood to write my songs ~~for men~~;
Since every song is but a keen self-giving
To tired life which, now and then,
Seems but a drab apology for living.*

*Out of my heart's blood
I mould music echoed from some Far's
Fire-margin, aching aye to bridge the mud
With many-wandering stars.
Each line I write cancels the severing line
Between the human and divine.*

*I do not write only because I can,
I write because I must.
I was begun when Time itself began,
Rose-fire interpreter of humble dust.
The ages take my vision undiscussed,
Truth takes my word on trust :
What god is greater than creative man ?*

Horizon

Naught shall deflower or efface
My virginal horizon-space
Buoying creation in a round
Of pulseless purity profound.

Notice my naked-curving calm,
How like the hollow of a palm
Out-stretched as though in one sublime
Blessing above the head of time.

I who am formless harbour forms
Of sparkling rondures, darkling storms,
A witness to the hues that heave
To mark for man his morn and eve..

I am all stillness, yet I cast
My silvery nets into the vast
Waters of sounds which leap and dive
To keep the sense of time alive..

Dark Mathematics

Dark-etched against horizons brimmed with
glows

I am a strength of mountain peaks conjoint
Unshakable, austere, without repose,
Each peak tracing the stars from point to
point

Drawing a graph across the skies to mark
Earth's destiny of splendours in the dark.

What do the mountain-summits, taciturn
Earth-giants, care if thunders crash aloud
Or sudden lightnings wriggle out and burn
The stars to ashes, tearing up a cloud?
They laugh at thunder-thuds, they only laugh
Transforming lightning to another graph.

Role

I bring an empty cup
That you may fill it up
Dipping it into life-refreshing fountains.
O may this being first
Be served to men who die of ache and thirst
That, at a draught, they may rise up as strong
as mountains.

I am a desert sky
Who see no cloud pass by
Laden with mercy for the sands hot-glaring.
O Love! let me be bowed
Under a heavy burden of rain-cloud
That rose-rich ways may open for the world's
way-faring.

I am an instrument
With music well-nigh spent,
The notes no more leap into fine creation,
And yet, I hope and long
Even now to break into such fiery song
As may be fit to celebrate world-liberation.

Haven

We are borne forward on the inviolate wave
Of some high will. Between the womb and grave
Life sails upon the moody waters spreading
Sad funeral-sails towards a joyous wedding.

Our bodies are the boats forever tossed
Upon that wave which we have often crossed
Between a birth and death, recurring distance
During the timeless voyage of existence.

Propelled by what unfathomable urge
Lo, now we sail along the sweeping surge
And now we are a-float upon the still
Blue undulation of that climbing will.

Around our speed dim creatures leap and bob
Making us tremble...but He knows His job,
The invisible Helmsman who with steady oars
Works out the rhythm of unnumbered shores.

O boat of me! leave no storm un-enjoyed
Now that through difficult wisdom you are
 buoyed
Upon that will bearing you ever onward,
Wave upon wave, out of the darkness, dawn-
 ward!

Songless Desert

This earth of me is flowerless dust,
Through dreamless nights and songless days
It has become a hardened crust
Under a fierce and naked blaze;
And all within me grows afraid
That it is final doom
And nevermore will any blade
Adorn it, nor a bloom.

God! every inch of me is packed
With agony grown deep and dumb
And all of me is dried and cracked
Since no more do your rain-clouds come
To soak me with a silver shower
Of sweet compassionate rain
That I, your desert-earth, might flower
All over once again.

Let bareness once again be lit
With serpent lightnings keen and sharp
And violent thunders burst and split
My brooding earth into a harp
That it may tingle into hues
After so long, so long. . . .
O may one mighty storm enthuse
This desert into song.

Wisdom

A crimson dot upon a stone
Hath taught me more of the Unknown
Than the wise prattle of those creatures
Known as preachers,
Highwatermark of empty monotone.

Sometimes the colour of a bud
Paying pure tribute to the mud
Inspires me to a deeper rapture
Than they capture
With their words of fire and blood.

Behold, the Little can create
More wonders than the so-called Great:
A squirrel's eye, a lotus petal,
These may settle
Accounts no man dare calculate.

Toiler

I am the lonely toiler. I have curbed
My passion to a purpose. I, a man,
Labour for men, dream-fulgent, undisturbed,
Fulfilling that irrevocable plan
Which soon shall make the bare earth don a
 star-vest
And on his back carry the golden harvest.

Without self-torturing hate, without recoil
Amidst all din, unnoticed and withdrawn
I hammer out the gold of life, I toil
Making the dark reverberate with dawn.
The fire within me meets the fire within you
And thus it is my toiling doth continue.

I am the silent toiler. Wide-unfurled
Though yet unseen, my banner which
 proclaims
That every human being is a world
With dreams for powers and thoughts for
 living flames;
With crowded street and broken men for
 neighbour
Unpublished and alone, I sit and labour.

Free Verse

Time is the constant mating-time
Of hush with music, clay with roses,
And everywhere sweet colours rhyme
In the enormously sublime
Poem of earth and sky, which, who knows who
composes?

Out of the grey and nebulous blank
Of aeons lo! what rose-flame lighter
Of lotuses which in a tank
Rhyme with each other and may rank
Higher than all the rhymes of any living writer.

And yet behold! how free they are,
Nurslings of Nature, each creation
Rooted, yet free. One high-born star
Rhymes with some other in a far
Poem of discipline beyond our calculation.

Authentic rhymes forever spin
Like whirling fires with moods to light them,
O free-verse writer! discipline
Your vagrant feet to walk within
Heart-freeing rhymes which hardly wait for us
to write them.

Wayfaring

Of a sudden you are freed
Of the mind's intriguing load.
Walk alone, O walk alone
With nobody to call your own,
O play upon your little reed
While you tread the lonely road.

Let each foot-fall while you walk
Gain in poise, increase in power.
Concentrated in your tread
Gaze at heaven overhead
From a stilly silver stalk
Bending like a dark blue flower.

True wayfaring is a deep
Sacrifice, and every fall
Of the journeying feet hath need
Of hard miles to make them bleed,
Faring feet which know no sleep
Once they hear the roadway call.

Of a sudden see! your chains
Slip and vanish on the air.
Distance waits without a stir
For your feet O wayfarer!
While for you all heaven remains
Breathless and exciting bare.

Hue and Shade

Colour is one unchallengable reason
Why men should cling to life, why men should
rave

About the beauty of the budding season
When gaudy butterflies and blue-black bees
Rove in the grove in liberated ease,
And even the dead beloved stirs and sees
Her lover through the eye-like bloom upon her
grave.

Nature works out her colour-schemes untrou-
bled,

Spaces into perpetual colours run.
The sky is brimmed with fires of many-bubbled
Planet and star since all the world, indeed,
Hides a great Childhood blowing through
time's reed

Bubble on bubble aching to be freed
And so the rainbowed play-time nevermore is
done.

Being hue-drunk how could I be alone?
A visionary I even in slumber.
Life hath its colours, death, too, has its own:
Between the budded leaf and fallen fruit
Some lonely artist seated at the root
Keeps playing tones of shades upon his flute
Ranging from changing life's warm red to
death's burned umber.

Desert Inheritors

Wounds have replaced warm roses. Nothing
stirs

Except black winds which dally with the hours.
Weed-gatherers have exiled the gardeners
And with uncanny cunning do succeed
In making men wild lovers of the weed
Forgetful of a heritage of flowers.

Inheritors of the desert grim and bare
We are self-crowned monarchs who contend
Painting red struggle on the envenomed air,
In love with ugly bitterness and strife,
Driving authentic beauty out of life
We record the beginning of the end.

Sowers of song-seeds have departed and
Our gardens bloom no more. The songbird
throng

Changes to vultures while the poet's hand
In sad star-widowed solitude withdraws
Leaving a multitude of hungry claws
Closing around the throat of real song.

Love's Price

I gave myself to you. Just to offend me
You gripped me without ruth and sought to
 bend me,

Bend me and make me bleed.

But then you only bent me, as you know,
Into a strong and steady warrior's bow
Ready to serve you in your hour of need.

Love! when I came to you full of desire
All heartlessly you flung me into fire
Seeking to work my doom.

But then I rose out of red martyrdom
A perfumed life-breath of what incense gum
Flooding your dim and solitary room?

I wept and yet, beloved! you resisted me,
You struck me into agonies and twisted me
Hoping that I should die.

But then, you twisted me into a rope
To tug your ferry that was losing hope
Under a thunder-driven stormy sky.

Artist Ache

After the swift creation of a song
Flame-tremulous, hue-thrilled,
All suddenly I long
For deep heart-stillness out of which to build
My real immortality. These limbs
Are then as aching pinions folded pure:
O wonderful wide being interims
Of dreamless vasts which burgeon and endure
Star-fired and nude
With exquisite creation-haunted solitude.

Out of this giant peace,
Womb of all beauty, throbbing space and time
Brief life-runged ladders climb
Towards some unattainable goal nor cease
Frustrated with the impossible venture. Lo!
Dim centuries between the dark and glow
Strive bruised and broken on the way
While poets yearn to say
Somewhat of the great yearning past the veil
Yet, at the end of masterpieces, fail!

What images dare fledged beauty mint
To signify that yearning?
What chiselled marble, what inspired tint
Suggest the Fire upon far altars burning?

O artist! all this terrible ache and beat
Within the heart are but a home-returning,
Each thing that you express
One foot-fall of the spirit's viewless feet
Shifting from loneliness to loveliness.

To A Bird

We have but a little day
O little bird,
Let us sing our songs and go away
Though our songs remain unheard
And remain
Unrecorded. You and I
Have got to sing before we die
If only
Because our hearts are fraught with pain
And very very lonely.

It is not a trivial thing
When a real anguish work
Its deepest self to songs:
Behind our short-lived singing lurks
Some dumb eternity that longs
Through us to choose
Release in forms of rhymes and hues
And all the little fledged notes
A-tremble in our throats.

We have but a little day
O little bird,
To say what we would like to say
Through word
And rhyme,
So let us lose no time.

Let us remember always time is precious
Though timeless dreams enmesh us.
What does it matter if we sing unclearly
So long as we but sing sincerely?

Unknown Quantity

This universe of myriad wonders built
Captures the scientist's uncanny ken,
One of our own has proven to the hilt
Plants are sometimes more sensitive than men.

The Great Simplicity makes many a move
Upon time's chequered chess-board and en-
chants

Some future scientist who yet may prove
That stones are far more sensitive than plants.

All is a terrible miraculous tension
Continued beyond human calculation.
A sudden Einstein with his fourth dimension
Dethrones a Newton with his gravitation.

Man's last discovery doth only mark
Another foot-fall of the Law which ever
Veils an Unknown inscrutable and dark
Smiling at intellectual endeavour.

Thirst

I have sung many songs by now
And yet, somehow,
The songs that I have left unsung
The words that I have left unchanted
Thirst in the heart to find a tongue,
The longing oft remains ungranted.

This lonely being of mine is hewn
Out of some tune
Which is not born, but yearns to be,
Whose shadowy echo sobs and lingers
About my music, making me
The solitariest of singers.

Quarrel

Quite a deal of immature invective
Passed between Objective and Subjective.

Said the former to the latter:
Yours is, at best, but vaporous chatter
While I, in every age, have been intact
A self-existent undeniable fact.
At every turn, in every known locality,
Of earth and heaven, acknowledged person-
ality.

And whether you accept me or deny
I am thrice conscious, Fool! that I am I,
The only one who do, in truth, exist
Immortal substance for the scientist.

•Ripening to rage, turning from warm to
warmer,
The latter flung this challenge to the former:
Have you not ever heard the world remark
That I am all-illuminated, you are dark?
O Fool! without me you can hardly choose
The nature of your fires and of your hues,
Since I am that which lends you loveliness
And on my moods depends your change of dress.
Without me you can neither blush nor stir.

I am your bridegroom, swift interpreter
Of mine own glows with which I light your face
While holding you in my supreme embrace.
And whether you accept me or reject
I work beyond your narrow intellect
Crammed with eternal values I exist
By mine own shadows wooed, own splendours
 kissed,
And all the while although you may not know
 it,
Exquisite pattern-weaver for the poet.

And while a volley of invective
Passed between Subjective and Objective
The moon rose yellow over the still top
Of a hill, a-staining the hill-top.

Voice of Objective

*O what a richly yellow pull
Yon moon over the ocean has,
It draws the billows to a full
Crash-orchestra performing jazz.*

*And when it rides the blue above
All earth seems cradled safe and deep,
In silent shadows lovers love
And time is one pure flower of sleep.*

*Just then a cruel siren shrieked and rent
The flower-cool moon-enamelled firmament.*

Voice of Subjective

*The wandering ocean waves have swooned
Under the siren's ghastly note.
Yon moon is but a bayonet wound
Plunged sheer into God's azure throat.*

*It is a bleeding ugly blot,
I hope it will not rise again.
Tonight what ruin may be wrought
By some death-dealing aeroplane !*

*There are no silent shadows now,
The troubled earth has held its breath.
Anguish is on the lover's brow
And time is a dark flower of death.*

Both Subjective and Objective
In hot haste ran helter-skelter,
(Forgetting all invective)
To the nearest shelter.

Priestcraft

I stand unmasked. The world is wide-awake
To my intriguings. Tie me to the stake
As I have done in scarlet history
To those who dared to hold the mystery
Of priestcraft in contempt. Long have I
 basked
In golden sunshines. Now, I stand unmasked.

I have, what though it may sound strangely
 odd,
Betrayed all mankind in the name of God,
 With psychological mind-mathematics
 Made ordinary men inane ecstasies,
With foxy cunnings, hardly new to us,

Exploited the weak-willed and credulous.
With deep-resounding temple-bells and deep
Chants have I sung intelligence to sleep;
With tricky incense-fumes that writhe and curl
Made temple girl on youth-blown temple girl
Writhe and curl also, yielding virgin charms
To some imagined deity in my arms.

I have been careful to create divine
Half-luminosities within the shrine
Never increasing them to brilliant glows,

Since wise old priestcraft through experience
knows

The hypnotism of half-lights which can give
Stone-idols breath seeming to make them live.

I am acquainted well with every shape
Of exploitation. I have mastered rape
Both of the soul and body. Every flame
Within the temple now is red with shame
At all my past corruptions, bygone tricks
Uncanny sacerdotal politics.

The State and I were friends once, unfatigued
In purple secrecy we twain intrigued
Against the people, rode upon their backs
Nor yielded them one moment to relax
But now both It and I seem going under
Their dreadful wrath which detonates like
thunder.

The Idol is no more my hiding place,
I am found out. Men spit upon my face
And I who played with souls now find my soul
Become a cracked and hollow begging bowl,
My voice, once chanting soft persuasive psalms
From door to door begging uncertain alms.

Time, the Sifter

Time is the sifter who shall sift:
His master fingers absolute
Shall test the tune, which hath a rift,
And the true music, on his flute.

Nobody shall escape his strong
Judgment that finally is passed
And then, my soul! your life of song
Shall be revealed to men at last,

To men whose judgment is but blind
Whose words are uttered in a way
Which makes them fleeter than the wind
Blown over dead and flowerless clay.

Be careful, human lips that reach
Out to the world in praise or blame!
Since falsehood or of thought or speech
Is fiercer than a bitter flame.

Time is the sifter who shall sift:
In difficult and ruthless ways
He proves that song was deathless gift
And what was but a passing phase.

The Saint : A Farce

The Saint

Scene

AT THE FOOT OF THE TREE LIES A MAN COVERED UP LIKE A DEAD MAN. TWO MEN ENTER :

FIRST MAN: He has been there for the past three days.

SECOND MAN: Covered up like a corpse, but he breathes.

FIRST MAN : Some say that he is the famous Benares Miracle man!

SECOND MAN : In fact. I know a blind woman who swears that, ever since she visited this spot yesterday morning, she feels that she is able to see, although her eyes are not at all opened!

FIRST MAN: He must be a saint. These saints have a way of behaving in mysterious ways.

(TWO OR THREE OTHER MEN ENTER)

THIRD MAN: Here he lies, I told you, and—you wouldn't believe me.

FOURTH MAN : Beside a tavern.

FIRST MAN : A saint! A saint!

SECOND MAN: What does it matter to a saint whether he lies in a palace of marble or at the foot of a tree which oozes with Toddy?

THIRD MAN: Beside a tavern!

FOURTH MAN: A saint is a tavern himself! He is full of the liquor called God!

FIFTH MAN: I swear that this man is a miracle-worker. The day before yesterday I was out of work, and I came and sat at his feet and prayed to him, and today, you see, I have a job!

SIXTH MAN: At the house of the wife of a betel-leaf vendor. The wife is a widow, left lately by her husband who has gone to the other side or, perhaps, to some other country. I have been appointed to ply the trade in his place.

FIRST MAN: A curse will descend on you for your disrespectful speech. You will see.

SEVENTH MAN: A curse! as if life itself were not enough of a curse? for fellows such as us, who have been turned into the streets without work, without a bed to lie on, and without a roof over the head to keep us safe and snug. What greater curse can your saints give a beggar?

THIRD MAN : And yet, you dare not approach that figure there.

SEVENTH MAN : I lay a wager I will....

SECOND MAN: Go on with your brag...Don't brag!

SEVENTH MAN: What will you give me if I uncover his face?

SECOND MAN: I appeal to you for your own sake, don't... You will be struck by lightning, poor fellow!

SEVENTH MAN : I don't fear lightnings. They are not half as terrible and ruthless as the frown of filthy exploiters everywhere.

FIRST MAN : You don't fear lightnings!

SEVENTH MAN: No, I have learned, through the misery of life, to fear nothing.

FIFTH MAN: You will be cursed.

FIRST MAN : Would you like to try?

SECOND MAN : Yes, would you like to see?

FIRST MAN : Get that man out of the way.

SECOND MAN: He has come to spoil the atmosphere of miracles.

THIRD MAN : Out with him.

FOURTH MAN: He has no respect for sainthood...

FIFTH MAN : He has no implicit faith.

SIXTH MAN: And a man without reverence and faith is worse than a plague-rat, red all over with venom. Drive him out.

ALL TOGETHER: He is dangerous. Drive him out.
Call in the Police.

SEVENTH MAN: Call in the police to help a saint whose God is helpless.

FIFTH MAN: He is here to spoil the atmosphere of miracles.

SECOND MAN: I have heard of a betel-leaf vendor who has left his house and disappeared. A great drunkard he was, if he is dead, and is still, if he be alive.

THIRD MAN: May be that the widow will ask you to take the place of her dear lost husband... Ho Ho Ho!

FIFTH MAN: She has already! God bless her!

SIXTH MAN: Is she beautiful?

FOURTH MAN: Has she a little fortune? She must have! a betel-leaf vendor usually has quite a little fortune buried somewhere.

FIRST MAN: It is sacrilege to talk so lightly sitting by a saint.

(ENTER A SEVENTH MAN)

SECOND MAN: You are polluting the atmosphere.

FIRST MAN : They have only just come out of the tavern, and a drunken man has no respect for persons.

THIRD MAN : Like the law....

FOURTH MAN : But anyhow, a saint is a saint, and nothing can disturb him. One to him are dirt and cleanliness, health and disease, light and darkness, good and bad, laughter and weeping, death and life.

SEVENTH MAN : That is more the description of a corpse... But, joking apart, has anybody seen the saint's face uncovered?

FIRST MAN : Nobody dare touch his cloth.

SECOND MAN : One never knows what may happen, if one even dares to approach too near.

THIRD MAN : O, I get a smell of roses, don't you?

FOURTH MAN : And I smell jasmines.

SEVENTH MAN : I smell nothing.

SIXTH MAN : I smell, I smell...

SEVENTH MAN : Toddy!

THIRD MAN : He is drunk... don't notice him!

SEVENTH MAN : But why don't we uncover the saint's face and look upon his beauty?

SECOND MAN : I warn you, don't!

FIRST MAN : Our hands are the hands of mortals, full of sin and falsehood.

THIRD MAN : You are right... We are the children of darkness.

FOURTH MAN : Don't let us touch the cloth.

FIFTH MAN : We must wait for him to wake up.

SIXTH MAN : There is a blessing in that.

THIRD MAN : We may be cursed if we approach too near.

SECOND MAN : In fact, if we are to believe what rumour tells us, one man was struck dead, as if by lightning, because he dared to approach this self-same saint.

SEVENTH MAN : Did anybody see it happen? and if so, who saw it?

THIRD MAN : Of course, I actually saw it with my own eyes.

SEVENTH MAN : When was this, my brother?

THIRD MAN : Well, it was yesterday that I saw it, with these eyes, these very eyes.

SEVENTH MAN : At what hour of the day or night, might I ask?

FOURTH MAN : When the length of the shadow of the tavern reached the bald stone behind it.

THIRD MAN: When we were together in the tavern drinking.

FOURTH MAN: Yes, that's right.

SEVENTH MAN: But how could you have seen it if you were with me? and I was with you at the identical hour yesterday, you remember!

THIRD MAN: That is right, also... but somehow, I did see it, and it is no good your trying to contradict it.

SEVENTH MAN: But how could you have seen it?

FOURTH MAN: Well, there are so many ways of seeing it. These eyes that we say we see by are not the only organ of sight.

SEVENTH MAN: No?

THIRD MAN: I saw the man struck by lightning, I say, and it is no use arguing, and—there is an end to the matter.

SEVENTH MAN: It is always difficult to discuss when only one man wants the discussion.

THIRD MAN: I saw it with my inner eye.

SEVENTH MAN: What sort of eye is that, my dear fellow? Does it look like an almond lit with a safety match, or like a torch with a little bulb peeping out suddenly from behind a convex glass?

THIRD MAN: It is like a million suns and moons rolled into one.

FOURTH MAN: And it is no use trying to describe it to you.

SEVENTH MAN: A million suns and moons! You see many more than double! But you do talk like a saint yourself. Why don't you cover yourself up and tie down at the foot of a palmyra tree? You will be able to make it your profession sooner or later, and, besides, you will have the advantage of not being obliged to reveal your ugly pock-marked face to the world, you drunken mug! Well, if you think that I am talking nonsense, I shall go home and cover myself up and lie down,—by my pretty wife, heigh ho! much nicer than being a saint lying down at the foot of a tree without a mate!—at least, without a mate of whom the world knows.

FIRST MAN: Sacrilege. These drunkards talk sacrilege... Filthy fellows! Their mouths always stink like gutters.

(ENTER SOME WOMEN)

FIRST WOMAN: I have brought flowers for the saint.

SECOND WOMAN: Does the saint never eat? I wonder how he can starve.

SEVENTH MAN: You don't call that starving I call it fasting. He can have his food now, if he wants, but he will not, since it is still day-time. He will probably feed fat after we have all gone to bed. Fasting wins many disciples. One starves when one needs food and one can't get it. A saint, holy man never starves! In fact he is so well-fed that he looks like a turkey-cock or a pot full of butter.

THE TWO WOMEN: Let us build a temple to him.
Let us worship him.

(ENTER AN OLD WOMAN WITH HER GRANDCHILD).

OLD WOMAN: O saint of God! cure my grandchild. She is being eaten up by fever. If she gets cured I will offer her to the temple.

SEVENTH MAN: And to the lust of idle priesthood.

OLD WOMAN: She will be the woman of God, and your bride when she grows up.

SEVENTH MAN: God and he are one. They will have to share the poor child when she grows into a woman.

(THE SAINT UNDER THE COVER SHAKES AND STIRS A
LITTLE).

OLD WOMAN: O, he has heard my prayer. Miracle of miracles!

(SHE PLACES SOME MONEY AT HIS FEET AND
DEPARTS)

FIRST WOMAN: A miracle. The child will be well by this evening.

(A YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAS BEEN SITTING VERY SILENT ALL THIS WHILE PICKS UP THE MONEY AND SLOWLY GOES AWAY WITHOUT A WORD.)

FIRST WOMAN: Money offered to a saint is divine money.

SECOND WOMAN: It is the money of the divine come back to the divine.

FIRST MAN: Lucky money, to come back.

SECOND MAN: O how luck the money is to come back...

SEVENTH MAN: Very lucky, indeed! It comes from the hard toil of some poor wretch who has earned it with sweat and ache and trouble.

FOURTH MAN: How many years of seeking the saint must have gone through...

FIFTH MAN: They say that when a man is lost in thoughts of God he behaves like an opium-eater.

FIRST MAN: He also sees strange visions, like an opium-eater.

SECOND MAN : And does not belong to this world any longer.

THIRD MAN: And although he is seen in the body is truly not in the body.

SIXTH MAN: He is pure spirit taken shape in order to deliver us from our own hideous and painful shapes.

SEVENTH MAN: I have heard it said that when a man eats opium he sees the same visions as the mystic sees. It must be a wonderful state to experience.

(THE SAINT SUDDENLY WAKES UP WITH A STAR)

THE SAINT: Who said opium? O give me some, give me some. O I have been craving for opium... give me some, and God will bless you, my friends... Opium! Opium!

FIRST MAN: Look at his eyes. How they burn and glow? They are red with weeping for God.

SECOND MAN: He is shattered, his body is shattered with the sheer ecstasy of divine dreams.

FOURTH MAN : O Miracle!

SAINT : Opium!

FIRST MAN: That is another name for God. The saints have strange ways of talking about God. Some call him lover, and others, opium.

SEVENTH MAN: Nowadays they call Him electricity.

(ENTER THE YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAD GONE OUT)

SAINT : Opium!

YOUNG WOMAN: (whispers): I have brought you some. Don't be in a hurry. Have a little patience, Here! (SHE GIVES THE SAINT SOME OPIUM. THE SAINT GULPS IT DOWN AND SEEMS TO BRIGHTEN UP. HE DOES, FOR NOW HE SITS UP).

SAINT: I feel well again. I feel I can walk. For the past four days I could not get up.

FIRST WOMAN: What's he saying? the miracle worker? what's he saying?

FIRST MAN: He has begun to talk his mystic language again. The young woman has given him something which is mysterious. These saints eat strange herbs and grow miraculous.

SAINT : Who is a miracle worker?

ALL TOGETHER: You... Why, you, of course. You, You have cured so many people of disease and sorrow during the past few days, you have done wonders for the village!

SAINT: I? have I? that is fine! As far as I know, during the past few days I was unconscious.

A WOMAN : Poor saint!

SAINT : Who calls me saint? I am not a saint.

ANOTHER WOMAN : Saints are humble. They never want to admit their own greatness (THE CROWD BEGINS TO FALL AT HIS FEET AND WORSHIP HIM. THE SEVENTH MAN LOOKS ON AND LAUGHS).

SAINT : why do you worship me?

SEVENTH MAN : Weak people want somebody or something to worship. Poor sheep!

VOICES : We worship you to bring upon ourselves true joy and blessing. We worship you for your humility. For your greatness. For your being able to fast for four days.

FIRST MAN : O give my wife a child. She is childless, O saint.

SEVENTH MAN : Ten to one, the saint is impotent.

SAINT : O give me opium.

(ENTER TWO POLICEMEN).

FIRST POLICEMAN : Here you are, at last. We have been looking for you all over your village.

SECOND POLICEMAN : What a heavenly picture! Is this the saint we have been hearing of?

FIRST POLICEMAN : He looks more like the betel-leaf vendor who has been missing from his village for the past few days.

SECOND POLICEMAN : Come along, Saint! You opium eater!

VOICE FROM THE CROWD :
What? Is he not a saint, then?
A miracle worker?
A holy man?

FIRST POLICEMAN : Miracle worker? not he!
Opium is the true miracle-worker. See how it has raised the dead! The dead is talking now, and walking now.

SECOND POLICEMAN : And he will only walk as long as there is opium in him. He is dead without it, nay, worse than dead!

FIRST POLICEMAN : By the way, what are all these flowers for?

WOMEN : We brought them in reverence to worship him.

POLICEMAN : They will serve for his tomb... For he hasn't long to live. Although they say opium-eaters live long. He would have certainly lived longer than necessary, had he not murdered his neighbour for the sake of a few annas to buy some opium with! A body has been found. It disappeared on the day he disappeared. The poor saint!

SEVENTH MAN : The murderer.

(A GREAT SENSATION FOLLOWS, WHILE THE OPIUM EATER IS HANDCUFFED AND TAKEN AWAY TO THE POLICE STATION).

